

GENERAL MECHANICS FOR INDEPENDENT TOUR COMPANY GUIDES VISITING COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG EXHIBITION SITES

The following are GENERAL guidelines to follow when visiting our exhibition sites. When in doubt, please ask. We are here to help you.

1. Hours of operation vary seasonally. Groups may not visit unless Colonial Williamsburg exhibition sites including gardens are open to the ticketed visitors. Flags mark entrances to all exhibition buildings. Check Visitor's Companion for hours of operation and special programming.
2. All guides leading groups on behalf of independent tour operators should have on display at all times identification that clearly gives their name and the tour company with whom they're affiliated. In order to avoid any confusion, no group leaders should wear clothing, nametags or anything else that includes any mark or image owned or registered by Colonial Williamsburg while leading a tour. This includes jackets, shirts, and hats with the Colonial Williamsburg logo. To enter all exhibition areas you must have a Colonial Williamsburg ticket or pass. You must present the ticket/pass to the costumed interpreter at the entrance to the exhibition sites.
3. Visits to exhibition sites vary in length, and a wait should be expected. Costumed Colonial Williamsburg employees can inform you of the approximate length of a visit, how many people are being taken in and how often and the estimated wait time. Plan on at least 5 minutes for an interpretation of a trade shop. If you must see the trade and you have very limited time, please politely inform the interpreter before the interpretation begins.
4. While waiting, please have the entire group wait in a line that does not block walkways (an individual can not hold a place for a group.) Since interpretations and demonstrations change, please do not promise anything specific to the group or talk in-depth about what the group will hear, see or do when they enter. (Interpreters will work with your group's needs and special requests whenever possible.)
5. Check with costumed Colonial Williamsburg employees at exhibition sites. Inform them of group size and follow their instructions for admittance. Be aware that many buildings have a limited capacity and groups over 20-25 may have to be split up. If your group needs to stay together, other guests may be brought from behind your group to enter with the group ahead of you.
6. If there is no costumed interpreter at the entrance, catch the eye of the interpreter, who will motion your group in as soon as possible. Please enter the exhibition site at the front of your group and inform the interpreter of any special needs or requests while the group is entering.
7. Please remind groups that NO GUM, FOOD or DRINKS are allowed at any exhibition site.
8. Please stay with your group for the entire wait time and visit to the exhibition building. You are responsible for the discipline and control of your group.

9. Most sites try to provide orientation interpretations while visitors are waiting to get into the site. We request that you do not interpret while orientation interpretations take place. Unless informed otherwise, Colonial Williamsburg employees will lead all interpretations and activities.
10. Costumed interpreters staff entrances to program areas and to buildings. Check with them for latest mechanics and programming information. During inclement weather, they may not be right at the entrance. Please look inside for them.
11. The Palace – Most of the year, tours of the Palace begin to the left of the building (kitchen side). Groups join the line. This may vary according to the season or weather. Look for a costumed interpreter.
12. Capitol Complex – The Capitol neighborhood may be entered either from Blair and Duke of Gloucester Streets or Waller Street or Nicholson Street opposite the Gaol. Both entrances have flags. Please do not interpret inside the walls of either the Capitol or the Gaol. Interpreters are stationed at these areas and will provide the interpretation. Capitol tours begin on the benches inside the wall on the south side. Please have your groups join by sitting on the benches. (Tour begins on the piazza in inclement weather.)
13. Midtown Complex – The Mid-town neighborhood may be entered either from the Rural Trades site or an entrance on Nicholson Street near Botetourt Street. Both entrances have flags. To visit the Peyton Randolph house, please enter through the Rural Trades' entrance. There will be an interpreter at the entrance to the house to admit you. With the Peyton Randolph outbuilding reconstruction, expect procedural and mechanical changes in the next year. Check with the interpreter at the entrance gate for the site mechanics.
14. When Headline Event topics are being discussed in the Courthouse, the 18th-century legal system will not be a topic for discussion. (Headline Event programs are always listed in the Visitor's Companion) Please check the Visitor's Companion for that day's Headline events program. Headline event impact program openings.
15. Carter's Grove Slave Quarters – Interpretations of the slave quarters are timed with the orientation movies (every 20 minutes). If you would like for your group to receive this interpretation, please escort them out to the slave quarters immediately after the movie and keep the group together through the interpretation. Please note – The slave quarter will close if weather becomes threatening or severe. The Reception Center can inform you of the status. When the slave quarter is closed, an interpretation will take place inside the Reception Center at the display. NOTE: The entire Carter's Grove site is closed on Mondays and is closed January through March. Plan on a 2-2½ hour visit when coming to the site.
16. Please be aware that in the evening Colonial Williamsburg's exhibition areas including gardens are open only for official Colonial Williamsburg programs. All groups entering exhibition areas must be escorted by Colonial Williamsburg interpreters. All other groups should be aware of security and safety issues and remain on public property.